

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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Control: 4648

Rec'd: MAY 6, 1960

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Action

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Info

FROM: MOSCOW

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TO: Secretary of State

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NO: 2731, MAY 6, 6 PM

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AS DEPT WILL BE AWARE FROM PRESS REPORTS, GROMYKO FOLLOWED UP ON KHRUSHCHEV SPEECH WITH STRONG STATEMENT AND IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN SUPREME SOVIET THAT LOCAL WORKERS MEETINGS ARE BEING ORGANIZED THROUGHOUT COUNTRY IN CONNECTION WITH PLANE INCIDENT. LATTER PROCEDURE IS OF COURSE CUSTOMARY WHEN ANY MAJOR PROBLEM OR CRISIS ARISES AND LEADERSHIP MAY HAVE FELT COMPELLED FOLLOW STANDARD PRACTICE IN ORDER SUPPORT SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THEY REGARD INCIDENT. WE HAVE AS YET NO INFORMATION ON HOLDING OF SUCH MEETINGS BUT ARE BEGINNING RECEIVE TELEGRAMS OF PROTEST, BULK OF WHICH COME FROM ZHITOMIR. UNLESS SUMMIT MEETING SHOULD END HAPPILY THIS ACTION MAY HAVE SOME EFFECT ON RECEPTION GIVEN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER BY PUBLIC.

DIFFICULT JUDGE SOVIET MOTIVES IN HANDLING THIS INCIDENT BUT FOLLOWING ARE PROBABLY SOME OF FACTORS INVOLVED. I BELIEVE NO QUESTION BUT WHAT SOVIETS WERE GENUINELY ANGRY AT WHAT THEY CONSIDER REPEATED PROVOCATIVE VIOLATIONS THEIR TERRITORY. THEY HAVE ALWAYS REACTED STRONGLY TO ANY STATEMENT OR ACTION WHICH IMPLIED MILITARY WEAKNESS THEIR PART. A SECOND REASON FOR STRONG SOVIET REACTION MAY HAVE BEEN FACT THAT SOVIET MILITARY ARE UNHAPPY OVER DEMOBILIZATION AND MAY HAVE DEMANDED STRONG STAND. SOVIET GOVT MAY HAVE WISHED PUT PRESIDENT ON DEFENSIVE AT SUMMIT CONFERENCE AND WEAKEN POSITION OF US IN WESTERN ALLIANCE. ALSO POSSIBLE THAT KHRUSHCHEV DISCOURAGED OVER

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-2- 2731, MAY 6, 6 PM FROM MOSCOW

PROSPECTS OF SUMMIT AND WISHES PREPARE SOVIET PUBLIC FOR FAILURE THIS MEETING RESULT IN PROGRESS TOWARD HIS GOAL. ALTHOUGH SOME OF MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES THINK SOVIETS MAY HAVE DESIRED PROVOKE US INTO CANCELLATION OF MEETING IN VIEW OF DIM PROSPECTS, I THINK THIS UNLIKELY. FINALLY, ALTHOUGH EVIDENCE IS SLIGHT I BELIEVE THERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF INCREASED OPPOSITION TO KHRUSHCHEV'S POLICIES WITHIN SOVIET UNION AS WELL AS BLOC AND HE MAY HAVE FELT STRONG STAND AT THIS TIME CALLED FOR.

ALTHOUGH PLANE INCIDENT CAN HAVE EXTREMELY DEEP IMPLICATIONS PARTICULARLY IF SOVIETS DO NOT TAKE ACTION IN SECURITY COUNCIL, I AM INCLINED BELIEVE KHRUSHCHEV'S EXPLOITATION OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER AND HIS CRUDE ATTACK ON VICE PRESIDENT HAVE MORE SERIOUS LONG-RANGE IMPLICATIONS. IT SEEMS TO ME UNLIKELY THAT KHRUSHCHEV GENUINELY BELIEVES HE COULD INFLUENCE AMERICAN ELECTION BY SUCH ACTION AND IMPLICATION OF BOTH THESE MATTERS IS THAT HE IS PREPARING WAY FOR TURN TOWARD HARDER LINE SHOULD THIS BECOME NECESSARY. IT IS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT IN BOTH HIS SPEECHES AT CZECH EXHIBITION AND SUPREME SOVIET MAIN EMPHASIS WAS ON IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND CAPITALISM.

THOMPSON

RLC/22

Note: Mr. Service's office (SOV) notified of receipt of message 5:35 pm 5/6/60 CWO-M

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